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67.2 Transcription by M. L. Wilson, Director of Extension Work, War Food Administration, and Brigadier General Philip G. Bruton, Director of Labor, War Food Administration. Recorded November 10, 1944. Time: 4 minutes, 21 seconds (not including announcer's parts).

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ANNOUNCER (LIVE)

Back in the early part of this year, many farmers were wondering just what they were going to do about their manpower problem, especially during the months when they would need extra workers to care for and harvest their crops. Well, the 1944 harvest season is over, and the big job is done. And we all know what a big production job it was -- a record output of food from American farms for the eighth consecutive year.

Just how was the manpower problem licked? Our reports from the farm front tell us it was licked in many ways -- by the farm people themselves working harder and longer hours; by more efficient use of machinery and labor; and by the employment of large numbers of farm women and children, people from towns and cities, workers from foreign countries, and prisoners of war.

So much for 1944. Now what's the situation going to be next year? We're going to leave it up to two men in Washington to discuss this question for us today. They're both officials of the War Food Administration -- Mr. M. L. Wilson, Director of Extension Work, and Brigadier General Philip G. Bruton, Director of Labor. We bring their discussion to you at this time by transcription. First to speak will be Mr. Wilson

TRANSCRIPTION

WILSON:

I think we can now make a fairly definite analysis of our farm labor prospects for 1945. Of course, the farm labor supply is one of those things that is affected by war developments...But with the outlook for a continued high rate of food production next year, I believe we'll have a farm labor problem similar to the one that faced us this year. What do you think, General Bruton?

BRUTON:

I think you're right, Director Wilson. Even an early end of the war in Europe would not materially relieve the farm manpower situation in 1945. Certainly we can't expect many of the farm boys in the armed forces to be available for farm jobs for some time yet.

WILSON:

No, we can't. Some of those who've been in Europe undoubtedly will be needed in the Pacific.

BRUTON:

Yes, and those who could be released from the armed forces after the surrender of Germany could not all be returned to this country overnight.

WILSON:

More than a million farm boys are in the armed forces, but I agree with you, General, that there probably won't be many of them back in time to work on the 1945 crop.

BRUTON:

Also, Director Wilson, I don't think we can count on many of the farm people who've gone into industry coming back to the farms next year.

WILSON:

I don't think so either. Even if much reconversion is possible, I look for industrial production to continue at a high rate in 1945.

BRUTON:

That's the way it looks to me. Reconversion means a shifting over from the making of war supplies to civilian goods. Many war workers will remain in industry after the shift is made.

WILSON:

History will bear you out in that belief. After the other World War, I remember, many of the people who had left the farms to work in the cities, stayed on in the cities. So with this situation facing us, it seems that we must be prepared to help farmers meet a farm labor shortage again next year.

BRUTON:

We're making our plans with that in mind. We expect to need about the same farm labor program next year as we've had this year. We may be able to reduce slightly the number of workers that we bring from foreign countries. But that will be possible only because we'll make fuller use of the war prisoners in agriculture.

WILSON:

That means we must continue this year's program. The War Food Administration and the State Agricultural Extension Services will again work together to help farmers get extra workers as and when they are needed. This year county agricultural agents operated some 12,000 local farm placement centers throughout the United States, with the help of county farm labor advisory committees and neighborhood leaders. Through these centers, about five million placements of farm workers were made during the year.

BRUTON:

And when the states needed outside help, the Office of Labor of the War Food Administration sent in foreign workers, or the Army supplied prisoners of war.

WILSON:

I believe those sources supplied more than 150,000 workers, didn't they, General?

BRUTON:

Yes, we had around 100,000 workers from foreign countries. About three-fourths of them were Mexican Nationals. The rest were from the Islands of Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Barbados -- and from Newfoundland. In addition, about 15,000 of our own American farm people were transported to other states for short periods of farm work during the slack season on their own farms. All told, we transported farm workers into 41 out of the 48 states. As for war prisoners, the Provost Marshal General's Office of the War Department reports that 50,000 prisoners were employed in agriculture this past year.

WILSON:

And for next year we believe it will again be necessary to recruit U. S. Crop Corps workers, even with the foreign workers and prisoners of war. It will still be necessary for the men, women, and youth of the towns and cities to pitch in and help get the crops harvested to supply vital food for the Armed Forces and for civilian use.

BRUTON:

That's right, Director Wilson. The farm people themselves, the Crop Corps workers who're willing to come out from the towns and cities to help on the farm, the foreign labor and the prisoners of war -- it's going to take them all to get the job done next year.

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ANNOUNCER (LIVE)

In this transcribed discussion of the farm labor outlook for 1945 you heard two War Food Administration officials -- Brigadier General Philip G. Bruton, Director of Labor; and Mr. M. L. Wilson, Director of Extension Work.

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